

# Physical Facilities Department Bulletin

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Subject: Meetinghouse Fire Prevention

Date: February 10, 2006

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We recently experienced extensive damage to a meetinghouse from a fire that started in the mechanical room. It appears that there was combustible material that added to the extent of the fire. Fire fighters entered the facility and located the fire in the mechanical room. Flames were contained to the mechanical room and fire fighters extinguished the fire within an hour.

The fire appears to have started in the fire box of the propane furnace located in the mechanical room. It spread quickly to cardboard boxes and numerous other flammable items that were inappropriately stored in the room. Flames traveled to the nearby main electrical service panels and began generating thick, acrid smoke as electrical wire sheathing began to burn. Due to cold weather conditions, the HVAC system activated and circulated heavy smoke throughout the entire structure, contaminating all surfaces with smoke particulates. Estimates of repair are in excess of \$100,000.00 due to wide-spread contamination. The meetinghouse has no fire suppression system.

The following is provided to increase our safety awareness on housekeeping/fire prevention. This may be a good opportunity to work with your local leaders and members. The risk of a fire can be reduced if all who use the meetinghouse take reasonable precautions. The following are some suggested fire prevention measures for all our leaders and members:

1. Keep all flammable materials, including wood, paper products, chemicals, and other debris out of boiler rooms, furnace rooms, mechanical spaces, and utility tunnels.
2. Keep all closets, cabinets, and other storage areas free from flammable clutter.
3. Permit no dehydrated, flammable materials to be brought into the meetinghouse (this includes straw, hay, cornstalks, grass, and dried palm fronds.)
4. Flammable liquids, including paint, paint thinner, gasoline, oil, and camping fuel, and any yard or camping equipment should not be stored inside a meetinghouse.
5. Stage scenery or props should be removed from the building as soon as possible after use.
6. Open flames and lighted candles may not be used inside the meetinghouse, and the use of space heaters should be avoided.
7. Local fire codes and ordinances need to be following when using decorations.

The facilities manager can provide this information (*Facilities Management Guidelines for Meetinghouses and Other Church Property*) p. 6-7. In addition the Housekeeping section (p. 4-19) in the *Safety, Health, and Environmental Manual* alludes to inspecting and maintaining in an orderly fashion.